IRWIN S. CHANIN SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE ISSUE

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ARCHITECTURE

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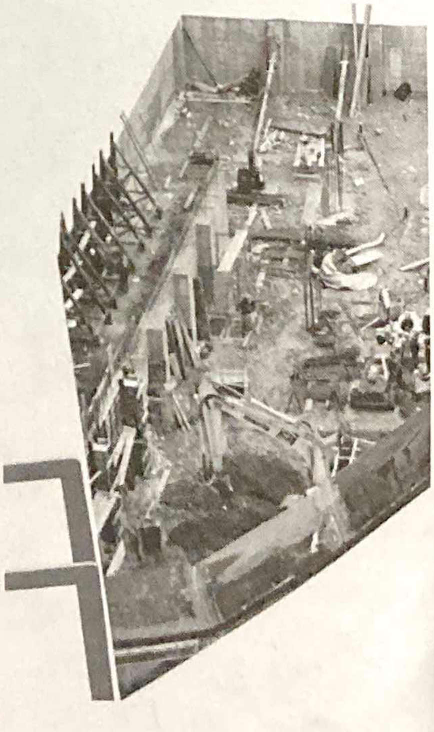


EDITORS' STATEMENT

Editors

Amber Chapin
Nickolas Robertson

Our intention is to capture The Cooper Union, New York, master planning, the environment, Brutalism, pedagogy, poetry, memory, monumentality, structure, corporate programming, abandonment, speculation, fiction, civil war, nuclear war, and the specific language of architecture through the projects, writings, and thoughts of the students of The Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture. Special thanks to students and faculty of the School of Architecture, and to Dean Anthony Vidler and Associate Dean Elizabeth O'Donnell. Additional thanks to the staff of The Cooper Pioneer.

A Survey Of Fourth Year Student Employment

Fred Awty, Anne Romme, and Arnold Wu

In the last five years (the term of an architecture student's education at Cooper), student fees have increased by 250%, from $500 per year to $1250 per year. International student fees have increased by 200%, from $750 to $1,500. Students work more hours now in outside jobs, and in jobs that must pay, versus perhaps more interesting but underpaying internships, than they have in recent memory. The following figures were collected from the current 4th year class, spring 2004. It was possible to collect information from 29 students out of a class of 31. We obviously could have collected many other relevant facts; with these figures we were trying to see if some of our assumptions were true. Feel free to make your own conclusions.

Work hrs/ week	accreditation hrs	credits	rent/month	parental support	loans	councils/ voluntary
20	100+	13	800	no	yes	0
20	0	15	650	yes	no	0
17	100+	15	500	no	yes	0
16	0	15	408	no	no	0
16	7	13	500	no	yes	0
16	10	17	365	no	no	2
15	0	15	1250	yes	no	0
14	3	15	0	yes	yes	0
12	15	15	525	yes	yes	3
12	20	16	150	yes	no	0
12	0	14	475	yes	yes	0
10	2	18	0	yes	no	0
10	0	19	0	yes	no	0
10	0	14	800	yes	yes	0
10	5	13	500	no	yes	0
10	23	16	475	yes	no	6
8	60+	16	300	yes	no	0
8	0	14	1350	yes	no	0
6	6	12	680	yes	no	1
5	4	14	800	yes	yes	0
5	6	14	625	yes	no	0
3	5	14	320	no	no	0
0	27	16	300	yes	no	0
0	0	17	525	yes	no	10
0	50+	16	1300	yes	yes	0
0	0	12	460	no	yes	0
0	5	16	290	yes	no	0
0	3	16	525	yes	no	0
0	5	18	1500	yes	no	0
8.79	5.03	15.10	564.59	72% yes, 28% no	38% yes, 62% no	0.76

Other numbers relevant to the above survey are:

Fees	American Citizens	International Students*
Student fee	1250	1250
Studio fee	150	150
Possible late fee	100	100
International fee	N/A	1500
Total:	1500	3000

*18% of students currently enrolled in the architecture school are international students. International students are not allowed to work off campus.

The possible on-campus jobs and respective wages are:

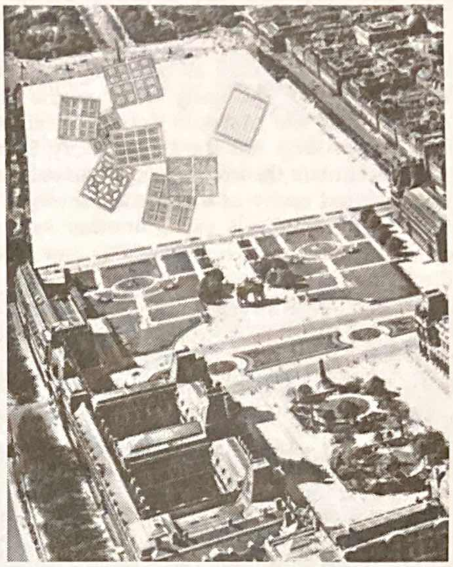
School of Architecture Archive	$10.00/hr
Computer lab monitor	$ 8.50/hr
Internship organized through Student Services	$ 8.50/hr
Student helper/tour guide	$ 7.50/hr
Library	$ 6.50/hr

Hours/semester, if working 20 hrs/week for 15 weeks= 300 hours. Pay, if working in the Archive: $3,000.

Scheduled class hours for a minimum of 12 credits/semester: studio 12; EVT 2; structures 2; construction management 1; town planning 3; 1-2 electives 4. Total: 24 credit hours. It is not too far from reality to assume that each class ideally requires the same amount of hours in home work. Scheduled hours per week, if working 20 hours per week: 68

The New Tuileries

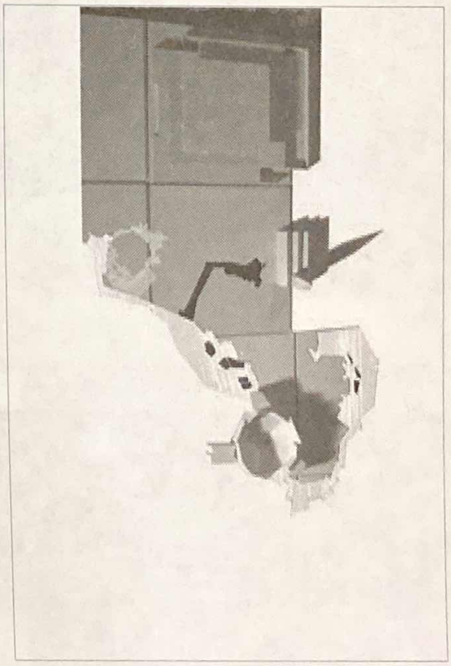
Yeon Wha Hong



Frames of the Kulturforum

Alexandra Kiss

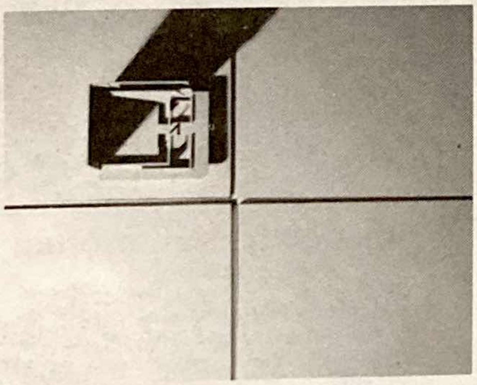
Traces of the forces of the arms of the Philharmonic Hall within the grid of Mies's New National Gallery locating possible frames of the Kulturforum.

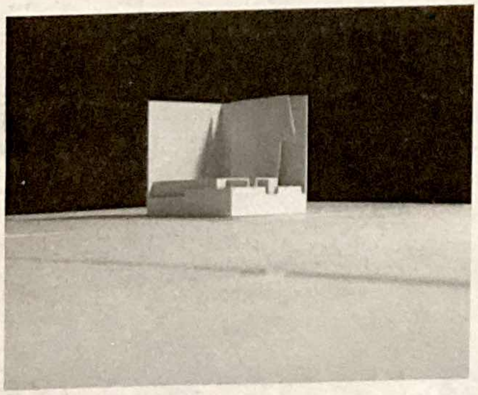


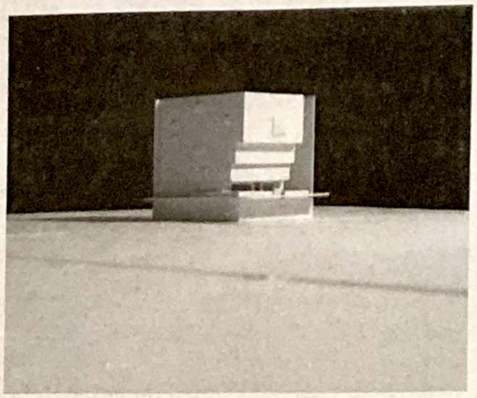
The Whitney

Clara Ha

The Whitney Museum of American Art, which occupies the southeast corner of 75th Street and Madison Avenue can be defined by architectural elements which address the city, as well as the interior of the museum itself. The party walls on the side and back of the museum act as "retaining walls" that keep out the existing city fabric and accentuate the museum's presence as an independent entity in a city corner. Within these retaining walls exists another system of walls that separates the service area from the main gallery area. The two systems of walls work together to support the ground floor and to create the *moat* which requires that one must cross a bridge to enter the museum. Finally, the mass off the main gallery is inserted into this whole system.







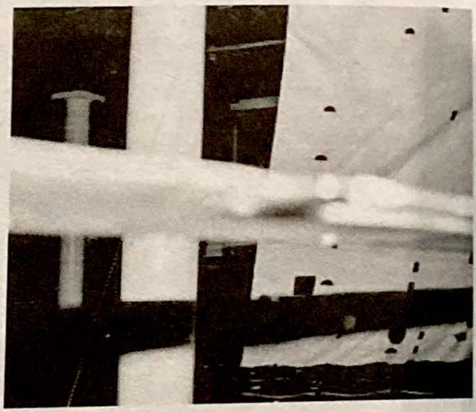
Brunelleschi's Mirror

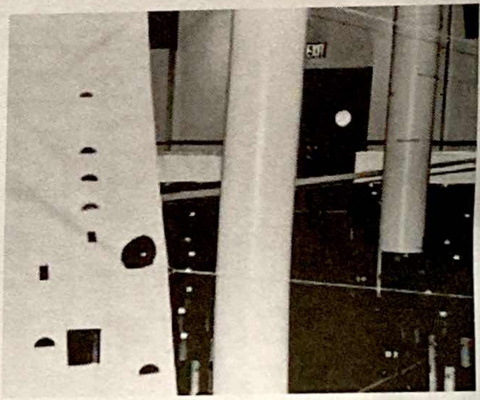
Emma Fuller

Brunelleschi conducted experiments with the use of mirrors. These experiments unearthed the nature of perspective, gave understanding to the baptistery of San Giovanni, located the position of the painter in space. The mirror is not an aid, it is a part of the system. It becomes a part of the space, used to understand and then exist within. Flaws and errors are corrected. The true nature of the space exists on this singular plane. It beomes more than a surface image.

I found this within my design project, the mirror as an unrecognized element until revealed within a photograph, an image, a moment in time within the darkness of the closed shutter, never seen again the same way. As the photograph is an aid, it also becomes a part of my system. The mirror seen through the photograph, contorting the ability to separate between the reflective object and the image reflected. A new orientation of the photograph repositions the universe.

Would you notice the presence of the mirror if you were in the physical space, standing within the Great Hall? The mirror present within the photograph is the reflection held within the shiny





Open Letter:
International Student Fees

Anne Romme

To: Dean Anthony Vidler; Dean Linda Lemiesz; Jorge Vadi, Business Office; and Mitchell Lipton, Office of Admissions

I wrote in December 2003 to Jorge Vadi, but never received a reply; maybe because my letter was by e-mail. Hoping to get a response this time, I will send this letter out farther. What sparked the last letter was a late fee of $100, which without notice (as far as I know), I was asked to pay. But the problem seems to be deeper than that.

I am aware that the Cooper Union has a legal right to raise the international students' expenses by 200%, but I don't understand how the radical consequences it has for a lot of its students (currently 18% of architecture students are international students) does not seem to worry the school at all.

When I and a lot of currently enrolled international students applied to the school, it was under different conditions; when I signed my I-20, I promised to be able to raise a certain amount of money for the following five years, including the fees that were 50% of the current ones. I come from a county where education is free, and I have little substantial possibility of financing an expensive education. Therefore, I was considering my financial situation carefully before committing to my full education here, knowing that it would lead me to make a lot of economic sacrifices. Considering what that would pay me back in terms of an invaluable education, it certainly seemed worth it.

My parents cannot and should not pay for my education; I borrow all the money that I can from the banks in my home country. I work each summer probably on average more than full time (as a waitress, because that pays better than a relevant, inspiring job in architecture). On average I work more than twenty hours a week during the semester, which sighardwood surface of the stage. The photograph transcends the singular plane. The stage holds the content of the Great Hall in its floor boards. The reflective nature of the stage mirrors reality and serves to distort. As a mirror it show the opposite of what Brunelleschi sought to reveal with the use of his mirrors. Instead of exposing a precision, an exact location; the mirror within the photograph shows light, darkness, shadows, shapes and forms within an irregular space. The circles of the lighting mechanisms hanging above become bursting ellipses somewhere else within the reflection of the stage. What does this mean? The stage turns reality into a dramatic farce? There is no difference? There is a transformation, a condition that occurs, its mechanism layered within the experience of theater, perhaps invisible to the present audience. I make this statement since my own awareness of the reflective stage was only when it was captured within the photograph. I will use these surfaces to understand the theater within my design.

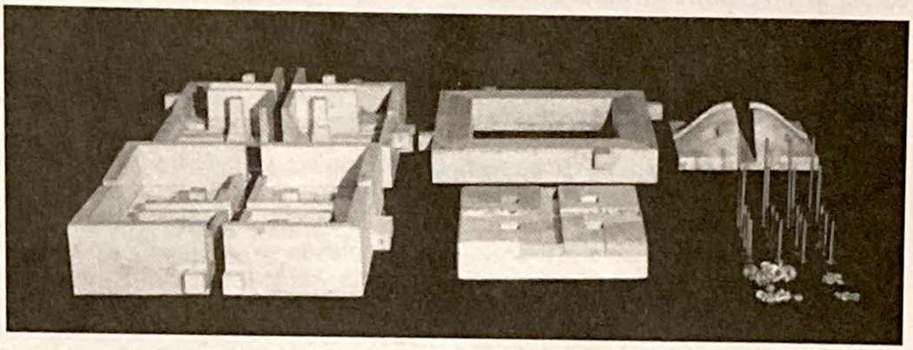
nificantly affects my school work, in terms of the number of courses I can take and the sincere quality that I wish my work to have. I am not eligible for any financial help here at The Cooper Union, and when I went to Student Services to ask for help or advise, I was guided to a drawer full of scholarships out of which I could apply for one or two (because I am not a U.S. citizen). This situation makes me very frustrated; it often seems to overshadow that should be my joy and excitement of being here at this amazing school where there is so much for me to learn and so much for me to contribute, if I wasn't exhausted from trying to survive financially.

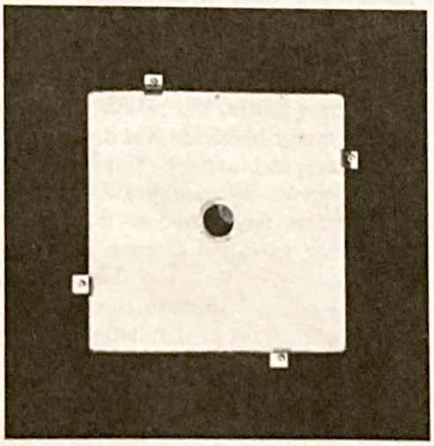
I hope the school will take steps to recognize the difficult situation that it has put it's international students in, in the same way that our faculty recognizes and appreciates our special contribution in terms of bringing diversity to the school.

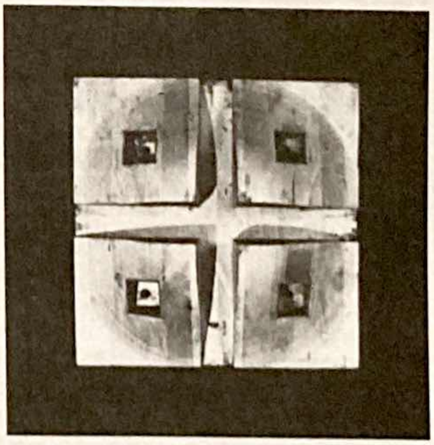
"Textile Blocks"

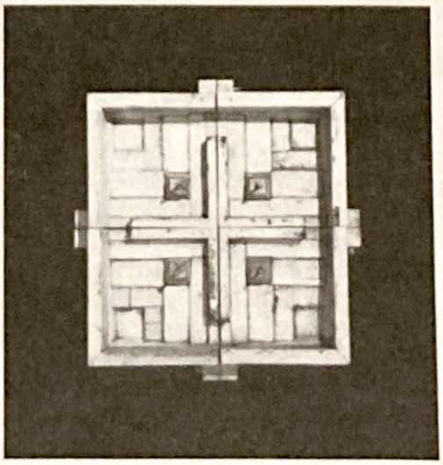
Jack Fowler

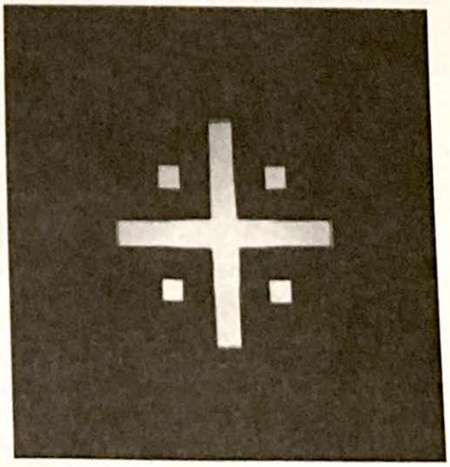
Beginning in 1914 Frank Lloyd Wright developed a series of construction systems, what he called "textile blocks" in which an arrangement of structural elements about a grid built a new sacred space of the modern house, one pushed through the interior of the wall. The literally woven architectural syntax of column and wall in each brick expresses and is the content of this new space. The construction of this relation is what gives function to these elements, what gives them life.The forms presented here attempt to address the space of Wright's wall and the projections of the American terrain, what is left and what will be left behind, and how we inhabitants of this land: New York City; Omaha; Los Angeles, build upon new and old ground, constructing something that comes between us and what we hold sacred.











Under The Belly Of A Brutalist:

The Transfer Of Aesthetics In Marcel Breuer's Bronx Technology II

Amber Chapin

The building is a brute: not merely an animal, but an animal beaten until it is savage. You must crawl below the belly, the bitch's teats, of Breuer's CUNY Bronx Technology II to mount the stairs. In Technology II the symbolism of the bared body, the post-war material truth of the 1950s Brutalist works is soured into an image of corporeal force. However, the Brutalism of its predecessors was not such an image; it scandalized the abstract beauty of the International Style nude (form) by running naked (exposed, exaggerated structure) and posed the only question possible in the reverberations of the end of WWII. How to begin again to build? In contrast, the five-year construction of Technology II began within the brutality of a new war, Vietnam. It must be read through this fact, as well as, the facts of its own structure. Breuer's work is an assemblage of virulently discrete elements: pre-cast and cast-in-place columns, belly, and wall. Assembled, these parts form the brutal image of an institutional reaction, whether subconscious or intentional, to the threat of student riots. The evolution of the riots can be read in the stages of that image's construction.

Seven columns begin as seven footings that start as seven wooden formworks and reinforcement. Before that they are seven holes in dirt. The potential for student uprisings existed in most European countries and in America at the time Technology II's excavations began. The first student occupations ignited in Italy in 1963. The architecture students in Milan and Turin took over their universities for several weeks. One student explains their complaints, "one of our professors, who had his private plane, would keep us waiting for hours. When finally we were admitted to God's [the professor's] presence, he blotted out our drawings with great strokes of his pencil. And what were these drawings? Plans for luxurious villas and great office blocks, never apartment housing for other social classes." The imbalance of university pedagogical structures was seen by students in Italy and elsewhere to be a small-scale version, a more mutable one, of that of the national governments.

Imbalance is designed into Technology II. Seven is an odd number of columns, literally, as though one column was left out or one added. The columns' facets widen upward so that the columns loom. They were cast in place in immense conical forms, cast around the rebar left protruding from their footings. Bristling but not long enough to extend all the way through the columns, the rebar would have been knotted with steel extensions, wavering slightly before the pour, premonitory. In Berkeley in 1964, one thousand students took over four floors of Sprout Hall in the first of the American occupations. The seizure lasted only a few hours, but the next day the police, the National Guard took over the entire campus.

Some people call the columns of Technology II tree columns because their shafts rise off small bases and widen into broad forking capitals holding up the building's beams and branching into forty-three triangular pillars that support its slabs and roof. I think, though, that they appear more like the legs and ribs of a great beast. Regardless, about the time the columns were poured and despite incipient protests, Lyndon Johnson escalated the U.S. campaign in Vietnam with 125,000 more troops and a doubling of the draft. He began the defoliation campaign in the north with saturation bombing. As the artificial trees of Technology II were constructed, the Americans razed millions of acres of living trees and human lives. In Vietnam they employed three methods to kill trees and to kill people and trees. Agent Orange herbicide was dispersed by both planes and infantry. This method requires patience, because sprayed trees take two to three weeks to lose their leaves. The dioxin in Agent Orange is carcinogenic; teratogenic, it causes birth defects; and mutagenic, it mutates chromosomes. A second method of defoliation was napalm bombing. In Vietnam the Americans invented gelatinous fire. When it falls on skin, napalm can't be washed off; rather, napalm slowly burns right through. This method works faster than Agent Orange. Whole forests melted away. Perhaps even more effective, though, was the third method, direct burning. American troops prowled into the jungle like mad firefighters and set them ablaze

The scale of deforestation, of massacre, and the resolution of the American government to continue the war in the face of broadening dissent, made 1965 a heavy year, a painfully distended belly. In France de Gaulle was re-elected to a second seven year term and in Germany the two main political parties merged forces, effectively eliminating the possibility for a feasible voice of political opposition. In general in 1965 there was an international political failure in the governments of many countries to respond to the swell of public frustration on many different but intricately linked levels. In Technology II the concrete belly was poured into a wooden trough perched on temporary wooden columns. Once poured, the concrete hardened around columns and their crowns of steel bars, as well as, around the stirrups protruding from the beams. This belly is the primary structure of Technology II: a slab enclosed in forty-three columns held up by concrete beams and seven super columns that some people call trees. The belly is the threshold; you must enter from underneath.

Breuer built a nine story wall behind the belly and columns. The wall is not literally solid; it encases spaces named classrooms and laboratories, but it appears impenetrable. Into both the belly and the wall Breuer fits pre-cast synclinal window frames into the grid of a steel armature pinned to the structures' columns. The frames are smooth and white. Their cant casts black wedge shadows, like those of rusticated fortress stones. On the south side of the wall, the frames are identical to those on the north face, but there are no windows. Instead, the south wall is a 240x160 foot concrete expanse broken only by the cuts of the shadows cast by its surface. Another type of wall, the barricade was erected in the streets of Paris in May of 1968 around the police-occupied Sorbonne by thousands of students and workers. Dozens of barricades built out of paving stones and debris went up spontaneously with no central plan, echoing the barricades of earlier French popular revolts. The police stormed these walls with tear gas and clubs; hundreds of students and workers were wounded and arrested. The next day a million people marched in the streets to protest the brutality, and that was just the beginning of Paris, May '68.

If 1968 was the height of the popular protests and the Tet offensive, a year pushed past so many brinks, then 1969 was the beginning of a slow decline. Technology II was completed that year and still Vietnam dragged on. 1969 was the year of the Kent State killings. In the days following, millions of students and others walked out of their colleges and jobs to protest Kent State and the U. S. invasion of Cambodia. Nine hundred colleges shut down, dozens of people were killed or wounded and 169 buildings, bombed. In New York City two hundred construction workers were paid a day's wages to attack student protesters on Wall Street. 1969 also witnessed the progressive dysfunction and the disbanding of the students protest groups, like the SDS. Thus, the completion of Technology II coincided with the decline of the era of students riots in defense of which it was built. Now it stands guard against apparitions that by now we can only reconstruct.

At the end of his lecture at the Cooper Union in 1986 Francesco Pellizzi spoke of the significance of reconstruction in Duchamp's *Etant donné*. *Etant donné* is a diorama of a crime scene hidden behind a door. Peering through a hole to glimpse the body of a raped and murdered woman, one can only reconstruct some idea of the crime. *Etant donné* is an extreme example of the reconstruction implicit in looking at any work of art; one simultaneously remembers and forgets the origin of that object's symbolical function. Examining Technology II, especially for those of us born in the generation after Vietnam, is a strange piecemeal reconstructive operation. It is an intellectual and visceral process of combining fragments of individual understandings of historical events with direct reactions to the building's architectural presence. Pelluzzi claims, however, that it is within such a process that a work's content resides: "exactly in the distance between the object—as re-presented—and its original function." One can only reconstruct some specter of that original function in order to get nearer to what Pelluzzi calls the work's symbolical core.

In *Etant donné* Duchamp makes the reconstruction of an object's symbolical core, as well as, the act of looking, the peep, the work's subject. He manifests the "distinction between the aesthetic function and the function of aesthetics: that they were no longer the same thing was the crux of the matter." In *Etant donné* he consciously separates how an object looks, its aesthetics, from why an object looks, from the ethical and cultural frame that is the function of its aesthetics. Aesthetics, once deliberately divisible from this frame or function suddenly has the potential to be transferred to different ones. This is, I believe, the case in Technology II. The original aesthetics of Brutalism are beautifully articulated in Technology II, but the function of Technology II's aesthetics is radically antithetical to those of its predecessors. The function of the aesthetics of the early Brutalists was part of an attempt to rebuild cultures devastated by WWII into new socio-cultural forms. In Technology II that aesthetic is appropriated by the university and pasted onto an ethics antagonistic to such new sociological formations. In entering the building from under its belly, students ascend into a quotidian hierarchical educational structure. They must clamber up in order to join.

As Cooper Union plans its new building, it is imperative to envision both the building's aesthetics and the function of those aesthetics. Thom Mayne spoke in his public lectures about his contraptionesque preoccupations. He communicated the nature of the aesthetics of his work as well as a glimpse of his subjectivity. However, Mayne has not yet made clear the function of those aesthetics, or how they might engage Cooper Union's existential character. Such questions are difficult ones, asked not by the architect alone but by the community. With a new President and a new Dean of the School of Architecture at Cooper Union, it is critical that the school address how the new building will inform and transform Cooper Union's present-day educational, cultural, and architectural visions.

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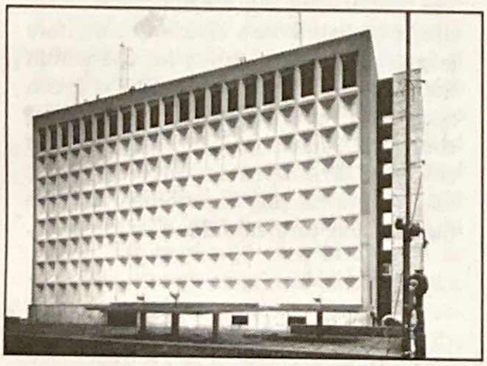
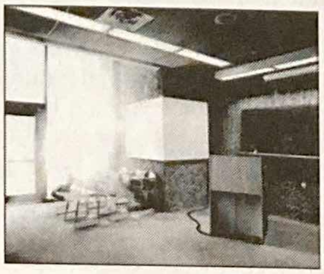
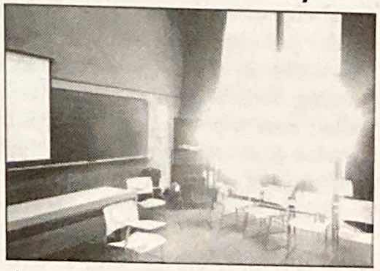


media technology
c-print, 2004

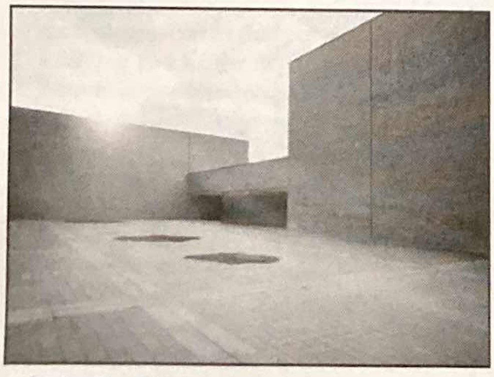
Nancy Davenport, *campus*



classroom #2
c-print, 2004



classroom #1
c-print, 2004

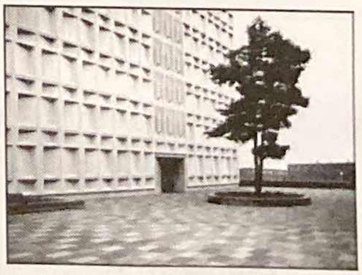


performing arts center
c-print, 2004

When I asked Nancy Davenport about photographing Marcel Breuer's Bronx Technology II (top left), Davenport spoke of looking through the camera's frame to see the "beauty" of the building's image. For Davenport, it seems, the camera filters through the associational after-effects of Technology II--the Vietnam War, the student riots--so that she may see and reveal an image of its architecture more clearly.

Davenport's series, *campus*, was recently on show at Nicole Klagsbrun.

Amber Chapin



mechanical engineering
c-print, 2004

Manifest Destiny and the Urban Wasteland

Nickolas Robertson

In 2002 a train derailed underneath the City of Baltimore and caught fire. Fueled by chemical accelerant and rolls of paper, the blaze reached temperatures of 700 degrees. The city's fire department, understaffed and nearly bankrupt, could not pull together the manpower or equipment to defeat the fire. An undocumented water main beneath the street, long forgotten but still under pressure, melted and burst, extinguishing the flames. The terrible disrepair of the city had come to be the solution to the problem.

> *What relationship is there between the so-called monuments of the past and the vague longing, propagated through our bodies to people the dust blown expanses and tidal planes of the future.*
>
> Sebald, *Austerlitz*

The planar city has become saturated. Railroads have declined. The last site within the city is the geographically questionable land of former switchyards: the valleys, swamps, and tideflats of natural man's topographic past. The subject of my thesis is the formulation of a new civic language, based not on the ideal city of Serlio's perspectival theatre, or the plan-based geometries of Ledoux, but rather in the dynamic section of the eroding hillside. Within the site of the valley, new typologies and programs can develop that are bound to both the mega-structures of speed and civic constructions of vision, such as long axis boulevards.

The Pennsylvania Railroad is the stitching of the East Coast Megalopolis. Carefully charting a course through shallow grades and over creeks, marshes, and rocky outcroppings, surveyors sought to find the path of least resistance between geographical barriers. Through low points, sink holes, and river trenches trains could enter into the grid of existing city centers. Because of the longitudinal structure of rails and speed of locomotives, they are disruptive to urban fabric and street life. In valleys and cuts beneath the plane of the city, high speed travel passes through with little obstruction.

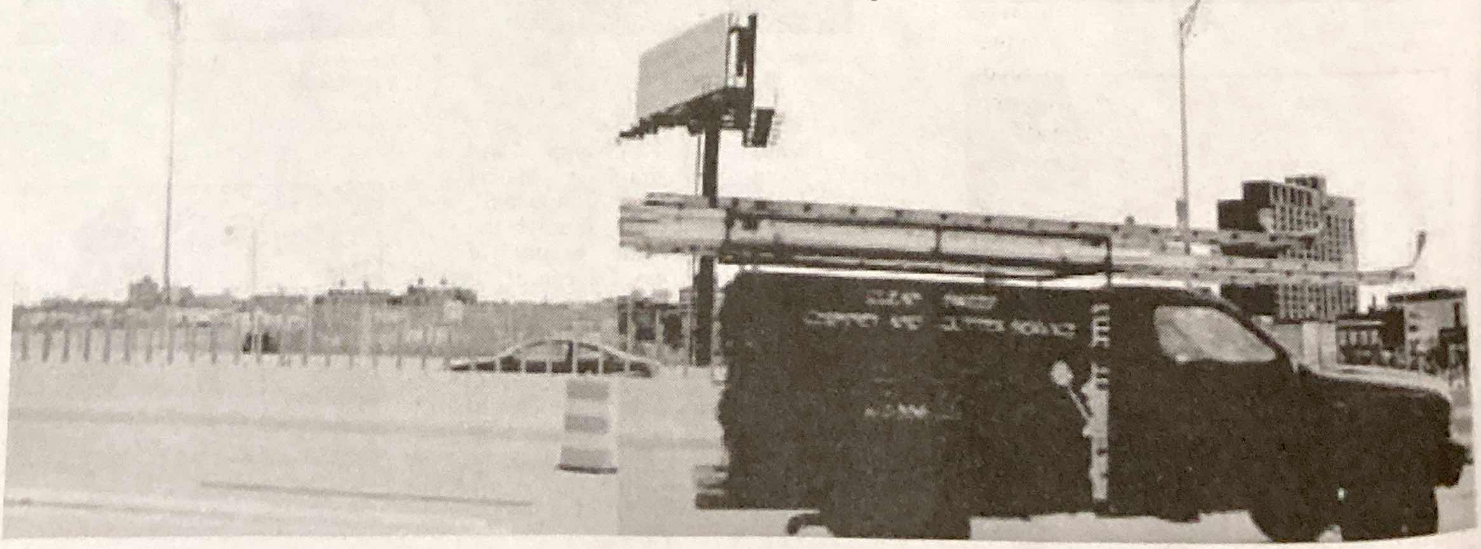
Urban theory, first invented as a Machiavellian educational aid to mayors and oligarches, placed the city on a flat plane. The grid extended into the distance, as in Serlio's theatrical urban settings, allowing the prince an infinite view of his holdings. At the end of the boulevard stood the obelisk, the vanishing point turned upwards.

City planners, in the early stages of American growth sought to bring their domain into the exalted plane of the ideal. Steam powered shovels ans cheap immigrant labor did the dirty work. By the 1840's the grid could finally be put into form in cities thatwere not born on flat surfaces. Manifest Destiny, the mythic personification of westword American migration, put a heroic face onto the constant and brutal displacement of aborigional cultures and geologies. The grid was the mark by which Manifest Destiny was measured on the land. Wilderness gave way.

But some natural features proved too massive for even high technology to defeat. In Baltimore, the site of my thesis project, The Jones Falls Valley provided Penn Rail with a back door into the city. After the water had been displaced in a pipe benath the earth, first rails, then highways poured into the city.

The Jones Falls River Valley was first used as a source of energy to rotate mills through the weight of falling water. The pressure of water carved out the walls of the valley over thousands of years. As water wheels gave way to the new technology of steam power, the use of the falls changed. Rather than directly harnessing the river, railroads followed the deep groove that the falls had cut into the heart of the city. Over time, the railroad networks that once filled the valley from wall-to-wall have been consolidated into two trunk lines: freight and Amtrak. The figures they once traced along the valley floor have been overwritten by a second: stands of timber. Generations of railyardsmen beat back the flora, until the decline of rail made their species extinct. Trees and shrubs emerge as the newest layer in the site, or perhaps a revival of the first.

Similar conditions of urban ecology occur in many sites throughout the United States. The condition in Baltimore is different because of the proximity of the dense city center and the valley. The same economic forces that generate the flow through these sites usually generates the capitol to pave over the top. But unlike Boston's Big Dig, the dilapidated condition of Baltimore's civic infrastructure creates a new opportunity for use within the river valley. Layered systems of green spaces, transportation and programming could be compressed into a new kind of city gate: a campus for urban ecology. Like the tunnel fire, abandoment may be the solution to a new kind of problem.



Give Me Gas, Food, Plumbing . . . Nature?

Nicholas Pevzner

Sustainablility is a hot topic. It is defined as the act of living today so as not to degrade the living conditions of future generations. By "harvesting what nature yields rather than looting more than it is capable of producing". Sustainability has found its way into the Swiss constitution and many UN documents. As architects, our interest in building. Sustainable building means finding a balance with surrounding ecosystems, so as to maintain a symbiotic, or at least benign, status quo. Urbanists and environmentalists promote the idea of the ecological city as the solution to industrialized humanity's parasitic relationship with nature. But is not the creation of a city in its very idea a non-sustainable act? Why do ecological hopes today rest on this traditionally parasitic entity?

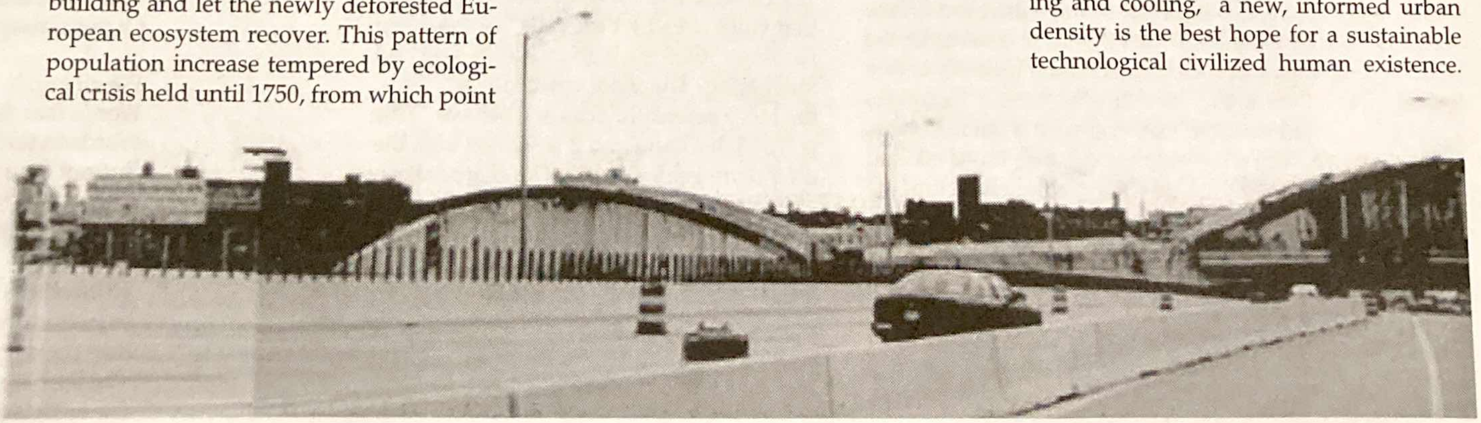
The process of making an urban environment is one of simplification for human use: the complex ecosystem of the old forest cleared to create a usable system of pavements and foundations, the complex food network cleared completely from the urban center and reduced to fields of crops and meadows for livestock around the periphery nurturing only those species that people find immediately useful. For a long time, however, a single city was limited in the ecological impact it could produce. Because the supply zone around the periphery always had to be dominated politically, cities were limited by their military power in the extent of supply zone that they could exploit, and therefore how large they themselves could grow. Nature would kick in as well to slow the growth of overzealous parasites: in their building boom of 1100 AD, European cities grew too fast, converting the once massive European forest into overfarmed farmland without thinking of the ecological consequences, and perpetrated an ecological crisis that put a brake on city building and let the newly deforested European ecosystem recover. This pattern of population increase tempered by ecological crisis held until 1750, from which point on there has been constant, uninterrupted urban expansion. Technology was the first phase shift of cities' relationships with the ecosystems outside their boundaries.

The technological city, through the spatial removal of the supply zone and dump site further and further away, forgot that it also exists within a greater biological process. Yet especially in their current technology-dependent state, cities today are extremely vulnerable to the greater biological processes that for the past 250 years they have been radically influencing. Today's technological city needs a regular uninterrupted supply of electricity, brought to it in the form of coal, oil, and natural gas from distant deposits, often abroad. It needs regular deliveries of fresh food, brought in from all over the world. It needs constant access to a huge reservoir of water, and the ability to treat and dispose of a huge amount of waste, preferably as far away from the city as possible. And finally, the sprawl of the automobile-dominated city means that without a car it is impossible to use the city effectively. Any of an increasing number of extreme climactic events can cut off the city's power lines, interrupt flows from its water reservoirs, or clog the life-sustaining roadways; unrest or malicious intent in supplier nations can slow the flow of oil or sap reserves of water. In any of these calamities, the technological cities stand to lose much more economically than those in developing nations, both because of disruptions of trade and losses by insurers. It makes sense, then, that in such a disaster-prone world, the self-sustaining city would be at a great advantage.

Sustainablity is the second paradigm shift that technological cities must undergo if they are to compete in the ecologically-dependent world. We techno-city dwellers have forgotten about the biological cycles that keep our cities alive, but only we hold the power to reintegrate technological humanity into a sustainable existence with nature. Despite some environmentalists' utopian ideal of collective humanity waking up to the dangers of poisoning the environment, tangible steps are taking place on the more modest scale of cities, backed up by initiatives and expertise from individuals and institutions with specific *green* agendas.

Action at the level of cities is the most extensive that is likely to occur, while being the smallest that is likely to make a difference. To this end, while we heard about the international delegations clashing at the Kyoto Conference on Climate Change, with rich countries and poor countries unwilling to sacrifice for the other's sake, the delegates of 145 cities were meeting with little fanfare in nearby Nagoya. These local governments, representing cities from 29 countries on both sides of the economic spectrum, held what was more like a discussion between partners confronting a common problem. They came away with a common pledge to plunge into environmental triage at the local level, such as promoting significant expansion in the supply and use of renewable energy, as well as, educational initiatives that would widen the acceptance of national environmental policies. Breaking the problem down to its core, with cities as the main contributors of ecological imbalance taking responsibility for changes at the local level has helped the discussion move beyond the ideological campaigns of radical environmentalists and radical industrialists.

The hope for civilized humanity's existence in equilibrium with the natural world rests on changing the way its core units' cities interact with the global ecosystem. Giving nature space for recolonization to check the urban heat island effect and negate greenhouse gas emissions, and becoming less energy-dependent through the lost art of passive heating and cooling, a new, informed urban density is the best hope for a sustainable technological civilized human existence.



Blood is Black

Alan G. Kusov

You, my dear, have been the sieve through which my journey strains. Long spurs of blades piercing the inner surfaces of my nerves just like fine catheters slowly drawn through their plastic casings. It all aligns quite perfectly, arranging the eternal concertina performed by me, that aimless acrobat clutching to his accordion, running toward her, some extrinistic event that would finally alter his life. The streets became my refuge. With every step, and every breath, I experience once again the splendor of those miserable days when I first arrived here, bewildered and alone, slowly inept in my attempt not to surrender to the situation. But for some reason, I looked for that miracle, and to accomplish it I had to wade through blood. Note the ease of expression, the fluidity of thought as it expands its surface, taking on and leaving behind. I am that nomadic actor. I wander aimlessly through this muddy lane bespattered with blood, fragments of the past detached and floating listlessly before my eyes. The flow of heroes scrambles toward the exit, and such a panic is here, such a sweat to escape, that the weak and the helpless are trampled to death into the mud. As flow, she, displeased and wanting tethers to be attached at the essential points, perfect-fit devices whose sustainment is their own stagnation, the death of the Man-Spirit, and the endless regression into pulp. I, on the other hand, note the ease of my entrapment as I pulsate cold fever, whipping back and forth in an exaggerated rocking, I falter and smolder stale. My whole being is responding to the dictates of an ambiance that it had never before experienced. That which I could call myself seemed to be contracting, condensing, shrinking from the stale, customary boundaries of the flesh whose perimeter knew only the modulations of the nerve ends. Her expression is demeanored by the chaotic discordance of her facial rhythms, a fluctuation which nevertheless keeps perfect time. And if she suddenly begins to groan with pleasure, surrendering to the quickening rhythm of her breath, and falling out of rhythm, this moment would demand nothing more than to place the red, white and blue on it and claim it in the name of our country and all that's holy. Everybody has at one time or another claimed this site, aimed to develop, to reconstruct, to colonize and settle. But no one really gets to keep it in the end. The carnage will continue, because there is that voice ahead which yells "Go on, keep moving!" One must go on butchering and butchering. The more cowardly one feels, the more heroically does one behave. This is No Man's Land and it is soaked with the litter of invisible deaths. The charges keep exploding, bullets pierce through the flesh and the corpses pile up, until it rains every twenty eight days and washes all the refuse into the river, leaving nothing but stench. Tentacled, felled and toe-blind, I've been sent stumbling into her arms, cradled and cared for, finding it so comfortable.

To Cor

Han Hsi Ho

It is raining
The rain that has bee
The winter that falls
In the rain

I stand with you alo
By which I later star
You are the lake
Being the lack of wh
But by the time I fin
That we are both fo
You disappear into
The myth, the myth
Of your disappeara

We all juggle words
Words that juggle u
Words in which we
But say them anyw
Is there any way to
Or have them mak
Or perhaps
To have them force
Fall and disappear
Into the disappear
The lacking force
Of and off of us

Anthology of Absense, videostills. Alan G. Kusov

stance

falling all winter
nd disappears

side the lake
alone

you are
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f

1984

Karim El-Tanamli

I never stayed home at night. Instead, I would dress as dangerously as I could. Go straight to the city's edge: walk along the seam. In my young mind, New York was bounded by Eighty-sixth Street and Astor Place. Lines marking the city's end and beginning, these boundaries lured me to march like a storm trooper searching for intruders, a privileged sentinel seduced by beyond.

On the northern frontier, at the top of a hill amid fleets of bars and luxury towers, pregnant whores lined the last boulevard smoking clove cigarettes. That smell still reminds me of our conversations the way butyl nitrate conjures memories of the night I watched knives puncture spleens near Clancy's bar.

The south was different. Unlike the stark line up north, Astor Place was a point; a place where the city was suddenly empty of obvious order. It felt like a drain, leaking vapors from the past. I would watch the punks spin the black cube without moving a hair, and imagine myself beyond its potential.

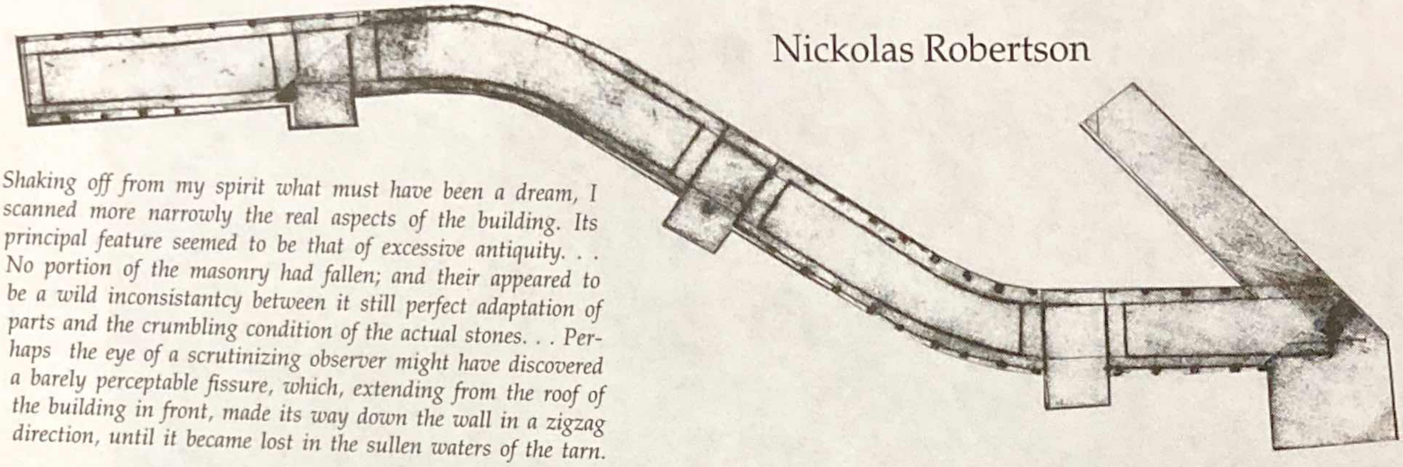
Crossing those thresholds seemed like a metaphysical transgression. I confronted 86th Street with the same reverence as the line of scrimmage on the dodge-ball field; remembering the sting of hard balls, broken bones and the humiliation of physical defeat. Like the dodge ball field, the city's edge revealed hidden struggles, and taught me about fear. I watched my peers transform from pubescent prep-school boys into aggressive predators. There were kids who frantically threw as fast as they could. Some would lumber across the field in a panicked daze, and every court had its share of the petrified, who would cower in the corner overwhelmed by contained confrontation. But not me. I'd scour the scrimmage line and pull the ambitious ones over. I'd catch them by surprise, those on the other side, and drag them across the border. This unorthodox method brought accusations of foul play, prompting the coach to banish me to the bench.

Such was the correspondence between Eighty-Sixth and the dodge ball line. When it came to Astor Place, everything was different. It was an empty threshold, a level to which I would attach myself while sinking below. Dangling beneath Astor's hole, I'd stop and watch with the same zeal as if sitting on the dodge ball bench, that place where I could stop running, sit next to the coach and just look. A reward to me, the bench carried such a stigma no one wanted to sit there for long. The more I sat on the bench, the closer losing came, until the game was over.

Today, the hole at Astor Place is almost filled, and that wall of bars at 86th Street has been replaced by chain stores. The city has transformed, the lines of scrimmage erased, the bench is gone.

Manifest Density: The Weight of Content

Nickolas Robertson



> *Shaking off from my spirit what must have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspects of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of excessive antiquity. . . No portion of the masonry had fallen; and their appeared to be a wild inconsistantcy between it still perfect adaptation of parts and the crumbling condition of the actual stones. . . Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptable fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.*
>
> Edgar Allen Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher*

The destruction of the aged mansion in Edgar Allen Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher* is embedded into its very bricks. Bound to the inbred and decrepit line of the Usher family, the house acts as a symbol of the family's decline. Architecture, by its nature as a container for the functions of living, always refers to an idea about what it is. *Guest* and *service* elevators in luxury hotels reveal a stratification between the wealthy and an invisible class of servants. The temple facade on a bank refers to the democratic society of the Greeks. The architecture of the house of Usher refers to and contains the family line. These are all relationships between architecture and content. The content relationship in the House of Usher is so strong that even the dead are are encased within the damp walls of the cellars.

In Lower Manhattan, proximate to the Brooklyn Bridge, stand two iconic groupings, both grappling with architectural content; The Al Smith Housing Projects, and The Chatham Green Apartments.

The Al Smith Housing Projects were among New York's first large scale "urban revitalization" projects. They stand fourteen stories tall, each level the same as the one above and below, each building the same as its neighbor. The spaces between the buildings are filled with trees and benches, all the signs of a park, without a park. Like the House of Usher, they are sited within the footprint of a swamp.

The swamp, now drained and forgotten, was once the northern edge of the city. In the early days of New York it served as a dumping ground for glue factories, breweries, and sewers. A lynching was conducted under the twisted trees at the water's edge. After the construction of the canal at Canal street, a new flow pulled the swamp's feculent waters over to the west side of the island. Without the small flow of runoff to replenish it, the still muddy land was open for squalid inhabitation. The first generation of settlers were the city's poorest--free African Americans in the period just before the Civil War. Irish immigrants replaced the Africans in a constant shifting movement of ethnic groups across the sullen tarn.

Finally, in what was seen as a progressive step forward, the shanties were razed in the 1940's for the Al Smith Housing Projects, a new way for the poor to live. But in creating housing in which the content was that of constant and unending poverty, isolated by the infrastructure of the Brooklyn Bridge's on ramps and the unending noise of FDR Drive, there was no progression. Now, Al Smith Housing stands stagnant and decomposing. Water still seeps into the cellars.

The label *low income housing* relates to a different content than the forms of the buildings themselves. Housing of this high-density type refers to Le Corbusier's Radiant City Plan, an industrial and recreational creation built to foster a new future. Raised above rolling green spaces below, with living spaces above, the structures of Le Corbusier's new city had no cellars, they were without troubled content.

One generation later, The Chatham Green Apartments were built directly across the Bowery from The Al Smith Houses. Standing above the ground on load bearing cores, with doctor's offices tucked underneath, they are apartments with an open civic modernist content. They were designed by Gruzen and Partners in the late 1960's.

The Chatham Green Apartments also refer to the work of Le Corbusier: The Algiers Scheme, a planning project for the coastal city. Laid out in 1931, the scheme contains a long, sinous building with multiple levels. They house apartments, doctors, grocery stores, a pedestrian promenade, and a highway. Although the programmatic layering of Chatham Green is much simpler, the "s" shaped plan suggests a connection with the massive transportation systems of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Gruzen and Partners are the architects working with Thom Mayne on the new Cooper Union academic building. In the contemporary world of celebrity architecture the paradigm has shifted. Architects no longer explicitely refer to the visionary work of the past by retrofitting ideas into contemporary New York. Instead, they invite the visionaries themselves into the process. Gruzen's role is to serve as a transparent liaison between the architect and the city. Owners place their money on line based on proven work, rather than progressive dreams. The referential qualities of architecture become dimished. Works don't refer to anything other than themselves, a dangerous condition of inbreeding. Zoning laws and max lot lines become as important as ideas.

For Peter Cooper, the education of the poor, not housing, was the content of The Foundation Building. J. Peterson, wrapped Cooper's institution in a Renaissance Revival facade on all sides, symbolic of the enlightened inner workings. But the Foundation Building is built on hard soil, the Hewitt Building stands opposite, on the soft side of 3rd Avenue--a different swamp, farther uptown from Chatham Square. Additionally, a neighborhood hostile to the changes of Cooper Union's structures wash against the new academic building. The content of the new building must be rooted in the academic programs it contains, not the sullen ground and flooded cellars that it overwrites. Cooper Union should not refer to any paradigm of the past or vision of the future. Standing across the Bowery from each other these structures are the houses of a vision and resiliance. That is already a paradigm.

Celebrity Speculation
And the Urban Victimization Clause

Dominique Haggerty

Urban renewal seems to be a persistent issue in architectural and urban discourse, one that will inevitably in- and trans-form their future. Across America, cities like Baltimore, St. Louis, Detroit, and Cleveland are scrambling in the rat-race against the Sprawl, in an effort to restore their industrial centers into cultural hubs, centers which had succumbed to post-industrial depreciation and were left for dead decades ago.

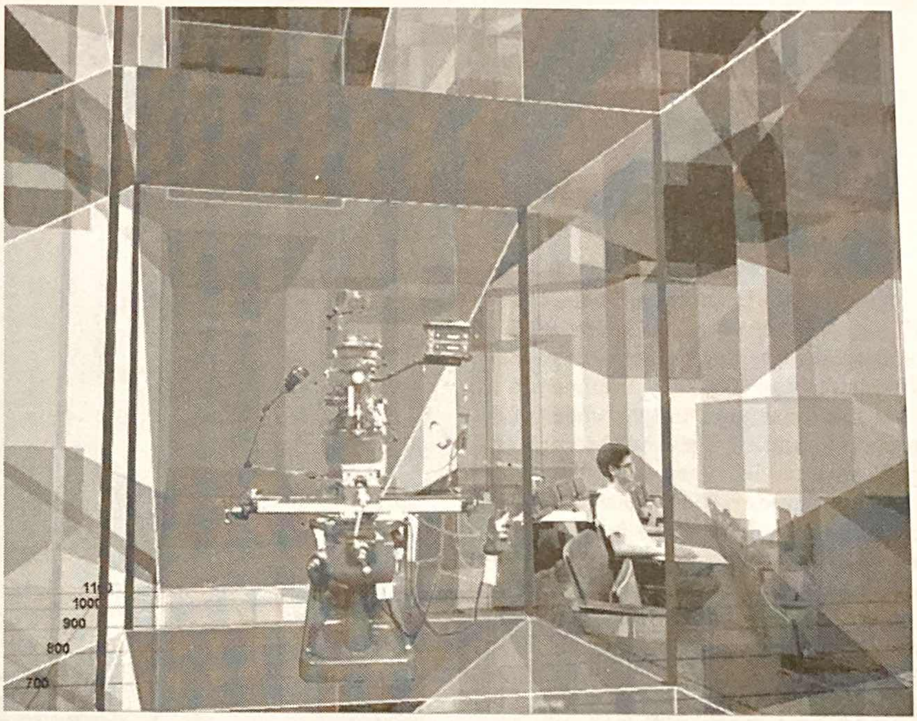
But there is another form of renewal, one which is less about economic rehabilitation than about vanity, referring to those cities which are hoping to leap from domestic attractors to world-class magnets with but a wave of the Gehry wand or a drop of a Hadid wedge. Gehry has even written that "Some people have said that 75% of [his] building is better than none." But did anyone in Chicago say that 40% of one of his buildings (i.e. the Millennium Park Music Pavilion which consists only of a stage set and a space frame pavilion) was better than none? Especially now, considering the budget ballooned from $150 million to $410 million? As long as Mayor Daly does...

And then there are always those cities which need only to maintain or validate their international status like Los Angeles or New York City, where signature architecture is just another stargazer's mark in an already bloated sycophant market. So that it comes as no surprise that Frank Gehry's name game should precede his work in such places. Case in point: the good-humored beginnings of the Disney Concert Hall very rapidly disintegrated into an infamous accounting dole, from a proposed $110 million with breathing room, until it found itself one morning 16 years later at $274 million, with lawsuits thrown at and by everyone including surrounding tenants whose air conditioning bills have significantly risen due to unaccounted heat reflected off the metal surface of the building.

I'd like to say that New York was lucky it ran out of money and didn't build its Guggenheim Revisited, but we're not out of deep waters yet. It seems NYC found spare change in its dirty laundry pockets. As the results of the NYC2012 Olympic Village proffer (yet to be approved), another budgeting misnumer with very serious implications looms. From an initial $2.7 billion, now recalculated at $12 billion with a couple more billion in peripheral costs, the proposal to reformulate Chelsea, Hell's Kitchen, and Queens neighborhoods amounts to a 59 block land appropriation and redevelopment of 20 million sq. ft. of unnecessary office space. Is this just a sportier, better packaged Big Dig parody? Let's not even get into Gehry's NY resurrection in Brooklyn under the Nets' and Ratner's umbrella, but that's just icing on a huffed-up cake.

Can New York City and its architecture afford this quixotic epic? Monetary funds aside, does the trade-off for one piece of visionary architecture in Brooklyn warrant the total condemnation and homogenization of 59 city blocks?

The recent popularization of architecture and the interest in civic programs thrills me, but in the process, we've let civil departments get involved, setting forth ridiculous ambitions and goals in the name of public service, using celebrity architects as Prada-clad cloaks to exploit alarmingly gratuitous budgets. In the end, no one department can claim accountability to the urban renewal bankruptcy machine, but it's all part of the blame game, and all we can do is be ready for it.



Astor Placements:
Transparency

Alexandra Kiss

The structure is an attempt to destroy the hierarchy and isolation between different types of engineering by making data simultaneously available across the site of the school.

The programmatic elements of the engineering school are all connected by a series of core elevators that carry the laboratory machines from the basement to the site of the experiment. The elevators are the plug-in spaces that connect and complete the intersection of the tubular classrooms. By connecting into classrooms they create networks of experiments not confined to a particular class or classroom. They can further carry the experiment to a different level, to a different context, and make the data available to any part of the engineering curriculum. Furthermore, the elevators can be used as connecting spaces, to either break up classrooms or connect them in a long string, potentially running along the whole site.

The structure suggests the probability of growth in any direction, zoning laws not being applicable to this kind of space. They can potentially form bridges with the Foundation Building or with other sites of interest.

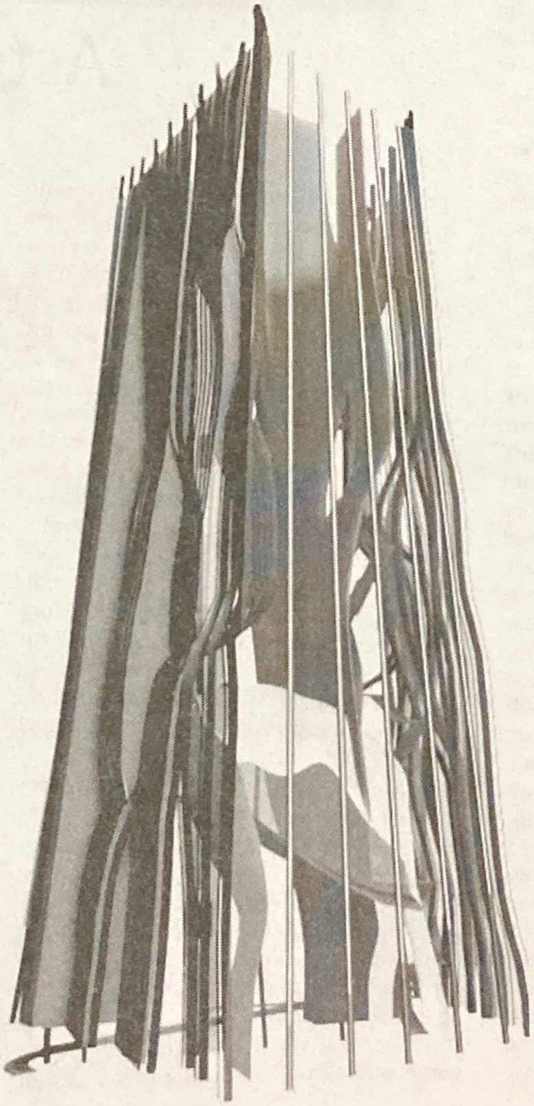
Astor Placements:

Intersection..........................in Section

Amir Shahrokhi

The new building for the Cooper Union is primarily to house the faculties of Engineering, Humanities and partially the faculties of Art and Architecture. In addition, the administrative offices of the institution and supplemental commercial space are included. In so doing the institutionís academic and administrative spaces are consolidated into two buildings, the original Foundation Building and the new Astor Building, creating a condition of shear between the two buildings that would be situated across each other on Cooper Sq. but facing opposite directions. Similarly, to the site of the Foundation Building, which is the terminus of a line of sight looking north on the bowery, the Astor Place site is the terminus of a line of sight looking south on Fourth Avenue.

The strategy for this design is driven by the latter conditions: the necessity to accommodate the various programs of the four faculties in flexible and integrated system, while setting a relation between the building and its urban context, specifically dealing with its role as a visual terminus and its programmatic relation with the Foundation Building. These parameters led to a design that used the structure as a device to create a partitioning scheme that changes from floor to floor. This either promotes or restricts access between the multiple programs depending on the particular circumstance of the floor. Consequently the structure becomes a set of weaving planes that pulls and pushes the program from the facade into the body of the building. The staircase on the west side of the building becomes a major spatial motivator for the project. The interaction between the staircase and the splitting surface of the facade works to create an array of hybrid spaces that function as social spaces. In addition to the structure being the tool for implementing the partitioning scheme, it also serves as the system that carries the necessary infrastructure for the building.



(Beauty)

Anne Romme

Alberti defines beauty as "a rational integration of the proportions of all the parts of a building in such a way that every part has absolutely fixed size, and nothing could be added or taken away without destroying the harmony of the whole". Palladio also defines beauty mathematically; "Beauty will result from the beautiful form and from the correspondence of the whole to the parts, of the parts amongst themselves, and the these again to the whole; so that the structures may appear an entire and complete body, wherein each member agrees with the other and all the member's are necessary for the accomplishment of the building."

Related to beauty, Alberti speaks further of the aesthetic appearance of the building of consisting of beauty and ornament. Beauty is defused throughout the building, inherent; whereas, ornament is the improvement to beauty, added and fastened on. Thus, beauty arises not out of subjective taste and perception, but from objective reasoning.

I am interested in the concept of beauty, of the absoluteness of it. I am asking myself if we use it as a criteria for evaluating buildings today, and if the term has been evaluated, because it is often used to describe a more superficial condition than the mathematical truths supposed above. I have noticed that the phrase "a beautiful drawing" is used in our architecture school, often in an absolute sense. Artaud speaks of beauty as well. He says that "all true feelings produce in us the idea of the void. And the lucid language, which obstructs the appearance of this void also obstructs the appearance in thought. That is why an image, an allegory, a figure that masks what it would reveal would have more significance for the spirit than the lucidities of speech. That is why true beauty never strikes us directly."

Artaud, then agrees with the renaissance architects that true (absolute) beauty should be deep, innately structural rather than ornamental. This leads me to the symbolic value of renaissance churches.

Wittkower argues that the forms of churches during the Renaissance period have a high symbolic value, not just as pure classical forms that were adapted without any gradation of meaning according to program. The symbolic values and structures lie in the centralized nature of the plan of Renaissance churches.

Every part equal from the center, the circle is the geometrical figure most suited for fulfilling the requirements of beauty. But these divine characteristics exist only in two dimensions, they are not directly readable in enclosed architectural space. The circle is an absolute value independent of subjective perception. The renaissance architects believed that if a church was built in accord with the intellectual conceptions of beauty, the subject would react instinctively. The hidden symbolic structure will resonate and emerge from the material profanity of built form. Without this underlying sacred form, the space would not be suitable for the sacred program of church. The conclusion is simple but powerful: Abstraction and reduction thin the wall between the material and the spiritual. I have heard man times at Cooper: the black and white photograph gives a deeper understanding of motives than the more *realistic* color image.

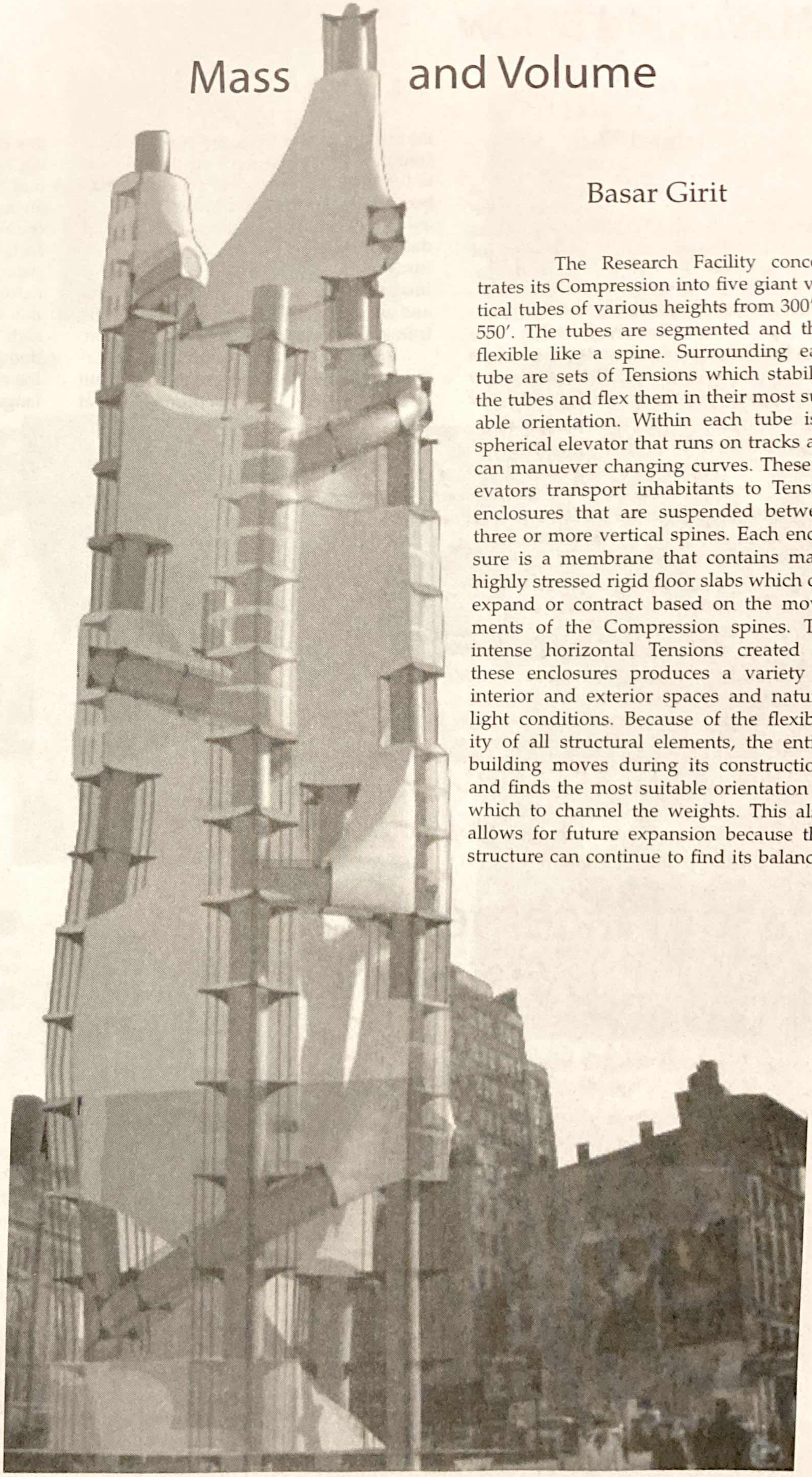
A hidden image is as powerful as the one that is easily understood. When we enter a centralized space, the eye can move freely and rotate upon the entirety of space. The ornaments, picked out as points of concentration could be called beautiful, but the true, absolute beauty lies hidden from easy vision. Perhaps it is only beautiful because it is out of our grasp at first.

Several times, I have been informed by my professors that the truth of the Mies corner can never be built, all we see is the pathetic collision between reality and idea. The inverted corner is just a representation, played out in steel. The negation of the corner is as present as the positive material of the walls. Therefore, neither could be added or taken away without destroying the whole. The true beauty of the ideal corner is an idea.

I want to finish with a quote that I found in a novel by Milan Kundera:

> *But what is beauty, mathematically speaking? Beauty means that a particular specimen closely resembles the original prototype. Let us imagine that the maximum and minimum dimensions of all body parts were put into a computer: length of nose, three to seven centimeters; height forehead, three to eight centimeters; and so on. An ugly person has a forehead eight centimeters high and a nose three centimeters long. Ugliness: the poetic capriciousness of coincidence. In the case of a beautiful person, the play of coincidence happened to select and average of all dimensions. Beauty: the unpoetic average. Beauty, more than ugliness, reveals the nonindividuality, the impersonality to a face.*

Astor Placements: Mass and Volume



Basar Girit

The Research Facility concentrates its Compression into five giant vertical tubes of various heights from 300′ to 550′. The tubes are segmented and thus flexible like a spine. Surrounding each tube are sets of Tensions which stabilize the tubes and flex them in their most suitable orientation. Within each tube is a spherical elevator that runs on tracks and can manuever changing curves. These elevators transport inhabitants to Tension enclosures that are suspended between three or more vertical spines. Each enclosure is a membrane that contains many highly stressed rigid floor slabs which can expand or contract based on the movements of the Compression spines. The intense horizontal Tensions created by these enclosures produces a variety of interior and exterior spaces and natural light conditions. Because of the flexibility of all structural elements, the entire building moves during its construction, and finds the most suitable orientation at which to channel the weights. This also allows for future expansion because the structure can continue to find its balance.

Astor Placements:

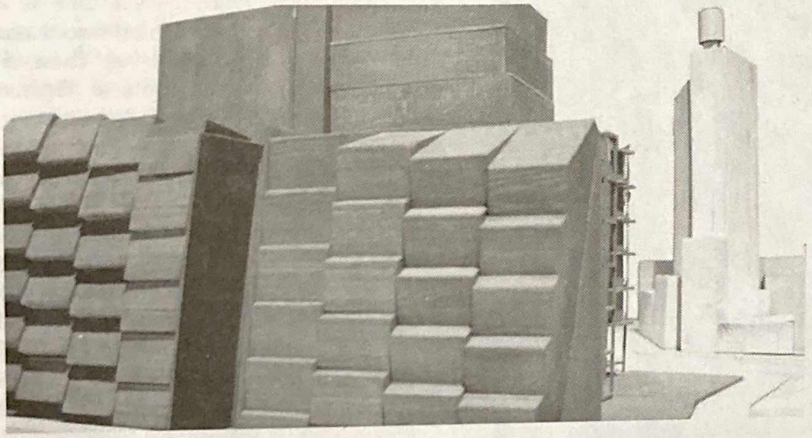
Above and Below

Michael Dub

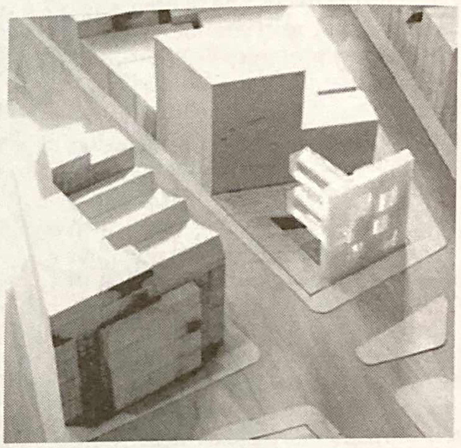
The proposal for a new school building, to be located on the current engineering building site, was based on the infrastructural history of the site. Under 4th Ave runs the subway, while on 3rd Ave, until 1955, ran an elevated train above the street.

The engineering site was the point where these two lines (one exposed, one buried) converged to frame the school and nearly touch. The section of the building, from 4th to 3rd Ave, creates a connection to the buried subway and rises to the level of the elevated train which has been lost to history and memory. The result is a shearing disruption of the ground datum, exposing the artificial, planar nature of ground in Manhattan, and evoking imagery of the subway trains sinking into and emerging out of the earth, and the vast infrastructural system the city rests upon.

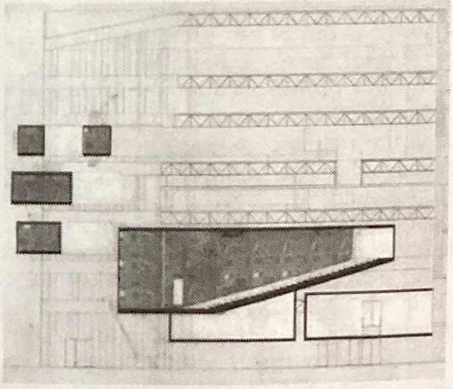
Only in the central, main circulatory axes does the ground maintain its stable, street-level condition. Part of this central circulation is a vertical parking lot, made possible by an elevator for cars. When emerging from the elevator on any given floor, students would be confronted with a view of car (a sign associated with the street-level) again insisting of the artificial and reproducible nature of the ground datum. Materially, this shift 3rd to 4th Ave would occur as a shift from open, exposed steel construction (the language of the elevated train) to the enclosed, monolithic construction (the language of the underground subway.)



Michael Dub



Yeon Wha Hong (above and below)



Astor Placements:

Inside and Outside

Yeon Wha Hong

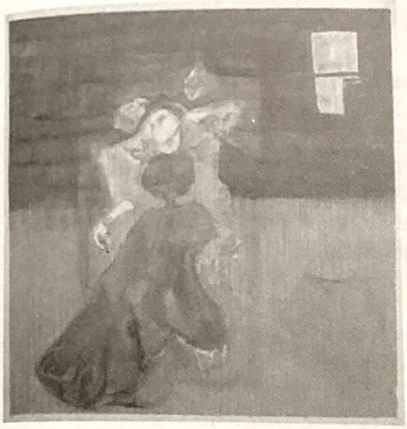
The new engineering school project is to renew and reinterpret the role of Cooper Union in Manhattan, as communicated by its form and function. I chose the most prominent site and designated the laboratories as the critical space of the school volumes that puncture through the translucent glass faÅade. The lab spaces boldly relate to the important west faade of the Foundation Building as concrete volumes that require very controlled environments, establishing a visual and metaphorical connection between the laboratories of science at the Astor Place site and the laboratories of art and architecture, i.e. the sculpture shop and studios.

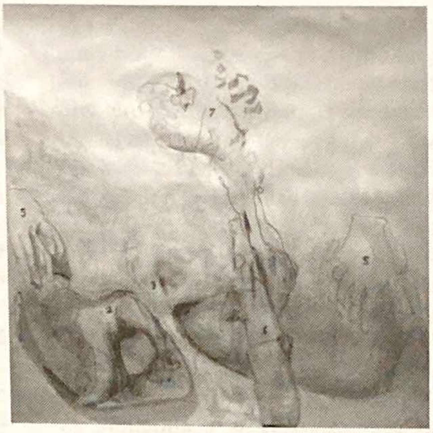
The public programs' exhibition space and the lecture halló also puncture through at the north facade as independent volumes within the column-slab structure, further establishing the collaboration between the engineering students and the art and architecture students with spaces for gathering.

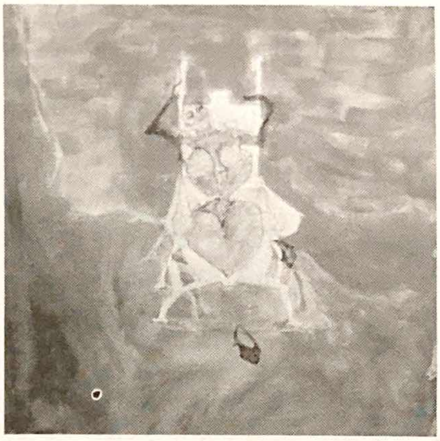
All of these volumes are faced with full height glass that reveal the function of the space to the public gaze, inviting the culture of open discussion, exploration, and experimentation. The west facade is a ramp zone that serves as both circulation and as the student lounge space, which leads up to a roof garden. Classrooms flank laboratories, and the use of translucent glass provides passive lighting

To make the plan as open as possible, the columns line the edges of the site, and trusses span the distance between the two sets of columns, the longest being about 100 feet. The HVAC, lighting, plumbing systems are installed within the depth of the trusses, about 4' deep.

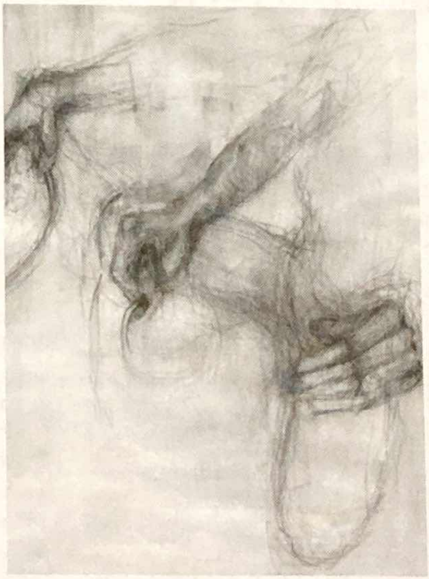
Significant Figures





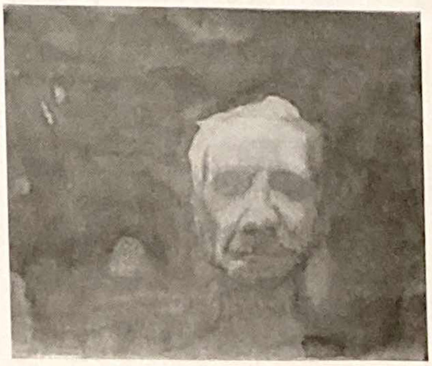


Portrait of a Hysteric, Augustine
Amber Chapin



Wheel Cycles
Anne Romme

Portrait of an Expatriate
Nickolas Robertson



Portrait of an Expatriate
Alan Kusov

Beirut: The Architecture of a Place

Brad Samuels

In January three of us traveled to Beirut with an artist to aid in a project on the history of the car bomb in Lebanon. We were there to map and document the site of a bomb which exploded in January 1986 at the height of the civil war (1975-1991). The following are short reflections on the experience of traveling to Beirut for this project.

Before arriving in Lebanon I had spent the previous two months researching the site of the bombing. In New York I had access to three different types of documents about this particular bombing. The first were various maps of the city and the site of the explosion, the second were recently taken photographs of the site and its surrounding buildings, and third were a collection of 108 photographs taken by a journalist roughly one half hour after the bombing occurred. Before going to Lebanon I used the documents to make a model of the site. I looked and re-looked at the photographs to determine sizes of windows and doors, numbers and heights of floors, types of openings, locations of stores and residences, types of debris, levels and locations of destruction, building details and ornamentation, etc. I scrutinized the photographs and redrew the maps. Through this effort I developed a strangely intimate relationship to this place, or to the photographs I am still not sure which.

I finished as much of the model as I could with the documentation I had and then went to Beirut. For the first three days we were in Beirut we met with various students, artists, architects and historians to try and get a very basic introduction to the extremely complex history of the civil war. Each of them had a different idea about what was important for us to know. Of course any discussion of the events of the 70's and 80's in Beirut first had to be prefaced by an explanation of Lebanon's pre-war history whether it be the French occupation, the Ottoman occupation, the Roman occupation, or the even the country's Phoenician roots.

It also quickly became apparent that there was an extremely diverse population with which we were going to have to become familiar if we were to learn more about the war. We were told about the Shia, Sunni, Christian and Druze populations, about their splinter groups and about the many militias which existed during the war. We were overwhelmed, and just trying to understand who was fighting who. The question of why seemed unapproachable.

On the third day we visited the site. It was in a predominantly Christian south-eastern district of the city. We arrived by car and had to park a few blocks away. We walked down a small street with one and two story buildings, turned a corner and arrived at the site. We, of course, recognized the place immediately as we already knew what we were then seeing for the first time. I found myself anticipating what was around corners or obscured by other buildings, constantly repositioning myself to physically verify the image of the place that I had in my head. I turned around expecting to see a tall building a hundred meters down the street, and there it was. I looked at buildings and saw plans, sections and elevations. I went to the tops of buildings to fill in parts of the site that were missing in my head.

I imagine this is a sensation that is often experienced by those who make trips to visit specific sites or works of architecture. But there was a difference. This was not like making a trip to LeCorbusier's Marseille Housing Block or Shinkelís Altes Museum. This was not a canonical destination that I had become familiar with through books and monographs. It did not occupy a place in the culture of architecture and did not carry the weight of a collective importance. The buildings themselves were not remarkable in any way but encompassed a spectrum of periods and vernacular types. We were confronted with the architecture of a place rather than the place of an architecture. As outsiders we had the privilege of only being able to measure and document. We were mapping the space of an event and in a way the space of a history unencumbered by architecture.

We returned to the site three times during the ten days we were in Beirut and the more I was told about the war the more I wanted to go back. It was the only thing that I could claim to know in this city.

Beirut: Fields of Association

Basar Girit

Reflecting upon these various manners of information transfer: the photo image, the evidences, the opinions, the myths, the 3D digital environ, and finally a few hours and days of awake experience, then reflection:

What sort of a mental reconstruction is vibrating in our minds? We continued to experience the computer world and its viewports, focused upon this form of media interaction for hours at a time. Our mental references had increased immensely by our recent experiential memories, and every so often we could verify these memories with our own photo images. With this new resource of evidence, we could now produce a more intricate digital environment. For us this place was becoming a highly detailed field of associations. The theme surrounding them all was the belief in the story of an act of extreme violence.

It was an interesting way to interact with an architectural medium and then produce forms of architectural imagery. The data of opinions and claims surrounding this place gave it diverse streams of reference. The architectural images acquired a context that was specifically described and the spatial relationship of objects became more interesting although they lack a discourse on physical form. This project offers useful lessons in the strategy of digital architectural presentation.

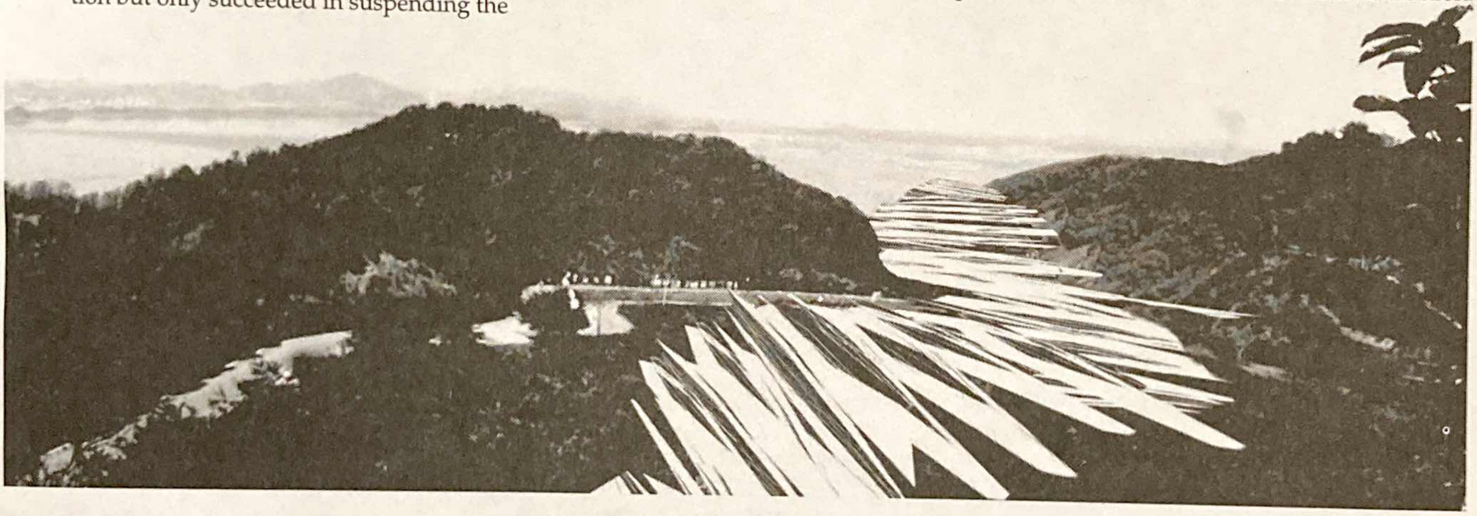
38°2.5: Korea DMZ

Sunnie Joh

The Demilitarized Zone is the 2.5 mile wide closed border which divides North and South Korea. Within this paradoxical condition of a line as a boundary is a border space.

The Korean War was executed as a ground war of peninsular division; the DMZ being the trace as the strategic military front line found artificial equilibrium at the 38th parallel in the 1953 armistice. As the conflict proved unable to reconcile the division in the time of the Cold War, the DMZ was proposed by the United Nations as a means of reconciliation but only succeeded in suspending the question. This question has become, in the last twenty years, ever more imminent as both cultures are facing the loss of a collective memory of a once unified Korea while the border remains closed and the generation that experienced a single country begins to disappear.

The border zone has by definition been demilitarized, freed from organized military control and its military character. While classified as ìdemilitarizedî, the land between the limits is, the border is, at the same time, heavily fortified with armed troops. Over a million North Korean troops are massed at the edges, facing the combined South Korean and American troops over an indifferent landscape. Watching for signs of attack or defection, both sides are in perpetual surveillance of the other. This type of border condition is interesting in that it defines a small window of time between the crossing of the border and the understanding of who is crossing the border. It is a space of delayed recognition. The architecture attempts to create a mixing of the perpetual movements of the border through controlled confusion. and ambiguity in anticipation of the crossing: thereby negating the line while defining its thickness. My thesis in affect is an architecture which responds to the temporal conditions of the border and has the potential to be at one time a constructed ruin and a device for reunification.



Beirut: Surreal Rooftops

Aleksey Lukyanov

On the rooftop of one of the buildings adjacent to the site we unfolded a map of Beirut which prior to our visit we had extensively used as a reference for modeling and mapping of buildings, places and events relating to the project. We tried to locate our selves between what we could see around us at the moment and the images produced by a photographer on the day of the event. For a while, these black and white pictures served us as one type of reality from which we had to work when constructing our virtual models, but maybe it is because of their certain graphic nature that some of the images by now were well stored in our memory. From the numerous conversations we had with the people we met and worked with, we also knew of and could imagine a number of key places that existed outside our field of vision. Those could also be found through the marks and sketches made on our map.

What we could see in person was only to some extent tangible to the photographs of 1986. The rooftop, which is rarely seen from the street, still maintained hundreds and maybe thousands marks left by gunfire and shrapnel. On the other hand, sidewalks and front facades - which were most damaged in the photographs, by now were patched up and repaired. These two settings seemed to have only a few common traits (and traces) and we found these traces behind the repaired facades, in isolated spaces of rooftops, side alleys and back yards.

Standing on that roof, what seemed to happen was an ongoing mental reconstruction of the place from images of the heavily damaged city we saw in the black and white photographs, from the partially refaced city before us and from our virtual models and their corresponding plan, section, elevation and perspective screenshots. Not having any firsthand experience of the events that took place in the city seemed to give us an even more unstable position from which these different views of kept fluctuating in our mind which made locating one self on that rooftop a rather surreal experience.

MAY TWO-THOUSAND FOUR

COOPER